

A close-up photograph of a woman with blonde hair, smiling and looking towards the camera. She is holding a cigar in her right hand. The background is bright and out of focus.

The Omen 39, 1

"Look into my eyes..."

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Policy

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish. Your submission must include your real name: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Thursday nights in the basement of Merrill on a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Thursdays in Saga, the post office, or on the door of your mod.

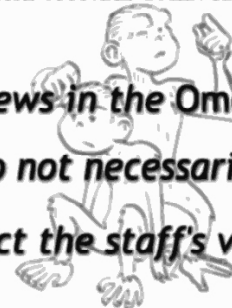
Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu or Ian McEwen, Box 286.

THE OFFICIAL OMEN HAIKU:

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)



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Layout & Editing Staff

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Ben Batchelder

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Fiona Stewart-Taylor

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Jonathan Gardner

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Because it happened

Front cover: Will Shattuc

Back cover: Rachel Ithen

EDITORIAL

by Rachel Ithen

Lovely readers of the Omen, welcome to a fantastic new year, filled with shirt-playing and deet-spraying and a lack of water bottle sales and other fresh and new Hampshire-y trends. I am happy to welcome many of you back, and even happier to welcome first-years to campus. I hope everyone is enjoying classes and Divs and student groups and friendship and everything.

Our first Omen layout has been going swimmingly, but we will always welcome new members! To the folks who happened to be wandering around the Merrill basement and stumbled upon us and came in to say hi, hi! We hope you'll be back. We meet every other Thursday at 8pm in the Merrill A Basement. You can find the specific dates on our hampedia page. You don't have to know how to do anything in particular, just show up and we will welcome you and feed you. And don't forget to submit your bad poetry, random doodles, obscure references, last week's homework, and formal articles to omen@hampshire.edu. We publish everything we get (as long as it's not anonymous or libelous!).

And if anyone's new to the Omen and picked this

up arbitrarily only to open the front cover and discover it's awesomeness, HI! We are Hampshire's one and only free speech publication. And you know what's REALLY cool? The Omen is officially TWENTY years old this year! That's right, one more year and it can buy beer. In 1992, a lovely person named Stephanie Cole decided to start this wonderful publication. I have no idea if she intended it to turn out like this, but it has evolved and grown, just like any other twenty-year-old probably has.



So if you'll be around in the spring, keep an eye out. We'll be advertising for a great big reunion where (hopefully) the old editors of the Omen will come back and say hello and we'll have food and dance and chat and be merry.

Until then, pick up the Omen every now and then when you happen upon a new pile of issues in the mailroom. Grab one in saga after dinner. Stop by on alternate Thursdays and say hello. We'll say hello back. And possibly more importantly, send us yo' shit.

omen@hampshire.edu.

And remember kiddies, the omen <3s you.

THIS ISSUE CONTAINS YOUR HAMPFEST ART

Vol. 39
Iss. 1

Happy Birthday to Us

September
20, 2012

SECTION SPEAK

My Div II Retrospective First Draft, Complete with Spelling and Grammatical Errors, Run-On Sentences, and General Lack of Quality

by Devin Morse

This is going to be a rather peculiar sort of retrospective. Its peculiarity is intentional: attempting to write a retrospective any other way would have been to force it into a mold that simply does not fit the sort of person I am, which is what I assume this is supposed to express. So although I give my classes in chronological order, the reader will often find that less time is spent discussing the class than with discussing some idea that I had which emerged from the class. This discussion will often seem (and be) stream-of-consciousness and open-ended, as will the retrospective as a whole. Again, this is because such a structure most accurately represents where I am in my academic development right now. Another thing that may be peculiar about this retrospective is its lack of narrative structure. This is for two reasons: one, that such a structure would portray me as moving towards some goal, when in fact my goal was constantly changing if it existed at all, and two, that I distrust any attempts on my part to structure my life as a story, as such a structuring will misrepresent much that happened. On the latter point, I also trust others in their judgements about the nature of my life more than I trust myself, for they have an outside perspective on it and are less motivated to make me look good. Hopefully this retrospective supplies enough material for someone to make an interesting observation about my academic journey. Finally, I write this retrospective

from the place of still being uncertain as to the exact nature of my Div III, and hope that a straight-forward description of where my mind has gone over the last 2 years will leave some loose threads that can be weaved into that project.

I entered Hampshire College as a transfer student. As such, I found myself almost immediately having to decide on my Division II concentration. I was in the awkward position of knowing that virtually any path of study was open. However, one path that really excited me was that of philosophy. Odd, perhaps, as I had read much more science than philosophy: I've often joked that I decided to become a philosopher when I realized that I didn't have the patience to produce something significant in science. The fact is, however, that it is the nature of my mind to not be satisfied with only pushing so deep. Indeed, this even applies to philosophy itself, and I am usually less concerned with the investigation of particular problems than with an investigation into the investigation itself: what are the natures of the claims being made? How are those claims discussed? What sort of answers are we looking for, and how will we know and agree that we've found them? In essence, how do we think about these things, and how ought we think about these things?

In the beginning, I saw this as an inquiry that would combine philosophy and cognitive science. However,

over time – particularly with my introduction to Wittgenstein – I became skeptical of the idea of using the results of psychology and neuroscience to provide part of an answer to philosophical questions. Part of the reason for this is that I've become very skeptical of the idea that philosophy is in the business of determining any facts (what sort of thing would a philosophical [metaphysical] fact be anyway?), instead thinking of philosophy as primarily about clearing up conceptual confusions. The result of a philosophical investigation, I currently believe, should be the sort of thing that can survive a change in our knowledge of what the facts are, as it would be concerned not with what the facts are but with what those facts would mean – that is, how they would fit together conceptually – if they were any particular way.

(I am becoming skeptical of this formulation too. Some limited contact with pragmatic ideas [and a quite accidental encounter with Rorty's "Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature"] has led me to wonder if philosophy is not perhaps much closer to science's tentative and self-correcting nature. After all, how can we really hope to have been lucky enough to have accounted for any possible objection?)

This, combined with my need to take all the classes

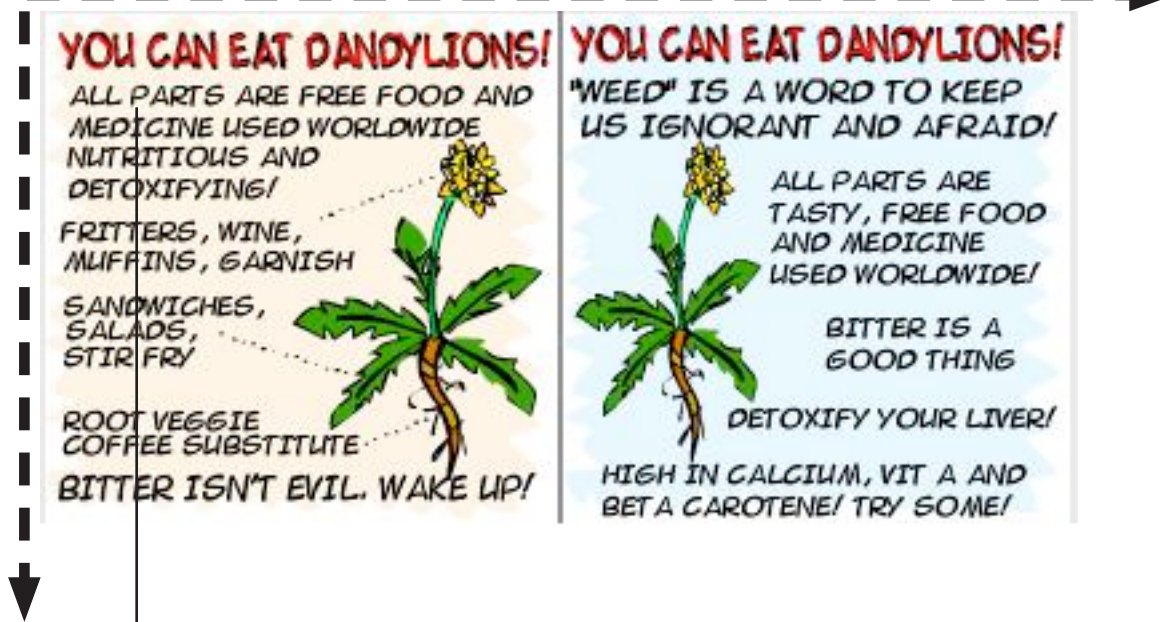
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needed to pursue graduate studies in philosophy, has led to one of my biggest disappointments, which is that areas of my interests were left un- or under-explored during my time at Hampshire. I came into Hampshire with an intention to study music: as my while I continued to take about 1 music class a semester, this interest quickly fell by the wayside. There are also areas of science, math, and politics that have been left wanting, which besides ignoring areas I would simply like to know more of, has also hurt my ability to do good philosophy (by which I mean not make dumb mistakes) and be an overall well-informed person.

Finally (for, this being a retrospective, I feel I should move on and give some description of what actually happened during my Div II), it is interesting to note that while my studies have been primarily in highly theoretical issues (mind, language, etc.), what concerns me most in my day-to-day thought and my discussions with others are much more practical, social issues.

Now, to actually describe the course of my Div II...

ATTENTION HUMANS!
CUT THIS OUT AND PASS IT TO ANOTHER!!!



In my first semester I ended up only taking 3 courses, as I had only signed up for 4 and realized halfway through the semester that I should drop one of them (Ethnomusicology).

In Jazz Ensemble Seminar, I was fortunate to already have an extensive musical background, and focused on improving my abilities to improvise and, in particular, play as part of a group. At the end of the class I was somewhat better at both, but still had much to learn.

Psychology of Language also came quite naturally to me (indeed, Joanna Morris was quite relieved to hear that I had already taken 5 years of college, but was thrown for a loop once again when I mentioned I had never actually studied linguistics beyond occasional recreational reading; however, I come from a family where linguistic play was always in the air and much humor came from exploiting the inexactness of expressions; and this, I think, gave me the sort of intuitive sense of the intricacies of language, to which I also credit much of whatever skill I have in philosophy). However, my research paper was terrible: not having much experience with writing scientific papers, I did not give myself time to do the research properly, and I was also (and remain) much more comfortable with writing papers where I formulate my own ideas than with writing papers collecting and expressing the ideas of others. The latter kind of paper, particularly with the need for appropriate citation, I find very tedious and therefore difficult. This is a big problem for me and something I have been avoiding working on. Anyway, one thing I did accomplish with the paper was to learn much more than

anyone should want to know about personal pronouns, which remain some of the few facts that I can explicitly recall in detail.

Freewill and Determinism was where I proved to myself that philosophy was an appropriate choice. The final evaluation, in particular, was glowing, yet far from allowing me to relax in some sort of knowledge of my own greatness, it has constantly motivated me to try to live up to the (I can't help but feel undeserved) regard in which Jonathan Westphal held me at the time. In particular I was moved by the idea that I became a teacher to the other students, as teaching others is one of my life goals. The knowledge of logic that I had picked up from my personal reading was particularly useful in allowing me to contribute to the understanding of the other students; and in the class I learned much about modal logic and possible-world semantics. Also, I have often found during my time in classes that I become a sort of translator between the teacher and my fellow students, since my sharing of perspective with my fellow students allows me to express what the teacher is trying to communicate in a way they'll understand, and express what they are trying to communicate in a way that the teacher will understand.

However, this class also left me with some guilt, as I got out of having to write a final paper and, because of my laziness, never did it on my own. In this I feel that I did not live up to what I should have been, and in particular what Prof. Westphal deserved from me. This relates to a persistent guilt that I have felt throughout my academic career, as I often rely upon my intelligence as a crutch, and do not put the effort into my work that it deserves. As such, I often feel that I have not earned the praise I've received (although I should trust my pro-

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sent by one
mysterious
Felix Lufkin

submitted
vicariously by
Ben Batchelder

fessors' ability to make an accurate judgement of me).

For Jan-Term I took Rhythms of the African Diaspora, a thoroughly enjoyable performance-based course. I think I did quite well. However, I was frequently quite late for class, a theme that is prevalent in my academic record.

In Spring 2011 I had a much fuller schedule, taking three classes at Hampshire, what was technically an independent study but was actually an experimental class taught by Evan Silberman for his Div III, and a class at Mt. Holyoke.

In Jazz Improvisation Orchestra I continued to work on the skills I had improved during Jazz Ensemble Seminar. I'm quite happy with my accomplishments in that class (although I could have done much better if I had practiced). I regret that since that class I have not had opportunities to continue playing with groups: I would like to have maintained and continued improving my abilities.

Philosophy of Mind was a very important class: it was here that I really learned how to write a good philosophy paper. I remain particularly fond of my last paper, dealing with epiphenomenalism and Jackson's "Mary" argument – notable, as I am usually dissatisfied with my papers as soon as I finish them. I was quite insecure with my contributions in this class, and was encouraged that the professor considered them useful.

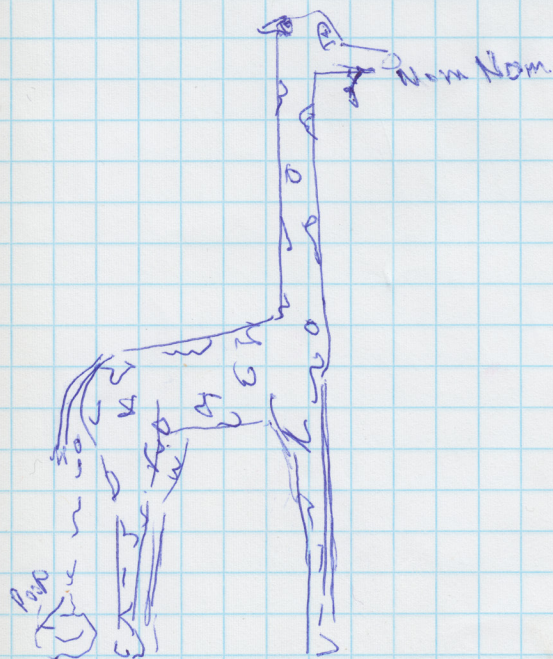
This class also started me thinking about explanatory gaps, which is one of the topics I've considered for my Div III. In Philosophy of Mind, as in many other topics (such as the debate between atheism and religion), we find a case where people on one side of the debate argue that the phenomenon has been explained and the other side argue that there is a step missing. In philosophy of mind, specifically, one side argues that the brain doing certain things leads to (or is identical with) the mind doing certain things, and that is the explanation, while the other side argues that you can't get from one to the other. How do we judge this? After all, any explanation gets to a point where the only thing that can be said is "A happens, and that makes B happen" or "that's just the way it is" (the latter occurring when we try to explain the laws of nature, for example). How do we determine where this point is? And, it's obvious that the people who argue for an explanatory gap are dissatisfied with

the explanation given – that is, they don't feel that it really produces understanding of the phenomena. Does this have any bearing on whether it is, in fact, an explanation? After all, lots of explanations don't make sense to lots of people. If someone came up with an explanation only they understood, would it still count?

Something about Brain and Cognition.

Low-Tech computing (taught by Evan Silberman) introduced me to ideas in Philosophy of Mathematics that I have continued to find quite interesting, particularly issues relating to the relationship between logic and mathematics and the relationship between the structures in mathematics and the world. It's also this class, I think, that got me thinking about an tangential issue that has worried me since and may be part of my Division III: what does it mean to prove something? For example, how do we tell when there's a mistake in the proof? If, say, a computer comes up with a proof that we can't make sense of, does it count as a proof? Is a proof meant to produce understanding of the thing proved? (See discussion of explanations earlier.)

Non-Classical Logic was quite good. Since then I have been quite sceptical of the formalization of the Material Conditional. This relates to a much more general problem, which is connected to the one mentioned previously: what exactly is a formal logic trying to do? After all, within the system, material conditionals are objectionless: it's merely a symbol whose presence allows one to manipulate sentences in certain ways. However, it does not seem to match the meaning of "if...then" in english: in fact, when some formally valid arguments using the material conditional are translated into English they sound blatantly invalid. So what, one may ask: aren't the vagaries and parochialisms of English precisely what we are trying to avoid with formal logic? Yet the rules of formal logic could be designed whatever way we like: the only reason we design them the way we do is so that they somehow match up with the way reasoning actually works. However, the reason we see a need to formalize is to avoid mistakes in our reasoning – yet this reasoning we are trying to fix seems to be the only basis of the system we're trying to build in order to fix it, and so on what basis are we determining which aspects



Welcome
Back !!
from your
Interim dean of
Students

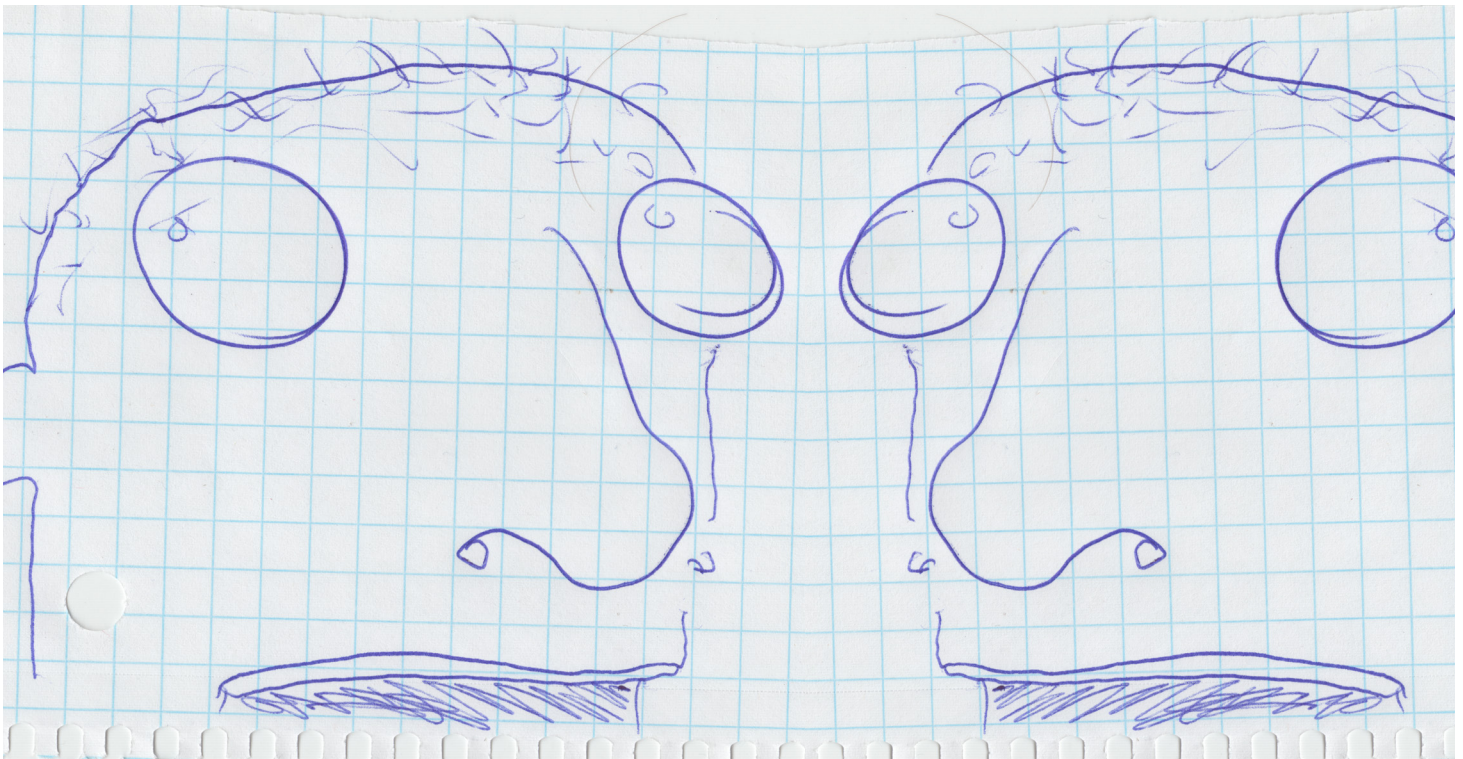
of our reasoning to preserve in our formal system and which ones to discard as being mistaken according to that formal system? The question boils down to this: we can build numerous (and endless) self-consistent formal logics, so what does it mean for one of them to be right? This relates to the problem of intuitional equilibrium: what is the relationship between our intuitions and the systemizations we build?

Fall of 2011 was an interesting semester. I became much more involved in the Hampshire community than I had been last year, being a member of Community Council and continuing student member of CS. This was probably one of my more stressful semesters, for personal reasons and reasons relating to my work on Community Council. Classes, however, went quite well.

Computer Music was a really challenging class. In developing my musical for that class I found myself struggling to settle on ideas and make those ideas work. I was almost always highly dissatisfied with my compositions and reticent about sharing them with the class. However, since then, I have grown much more fond of these compositions, particularly the one using loops and one that was not technically for the class but that I did myself. This latter composition came out of an accident: the analog-to-digital converter (which, as it's name suggests, converts an analog signal, such as sound, into a digital format) in the media lab began malfunctioning, producing highly distorted sounds when I played into

it. What I should have done was stop using the system and tell someone that things weren't working: instead, I played some chords into it to see what sort of sounds they'd produced, and then based a short improvisatory recording around this. This is similar to how in my first composition (a sound collage) I used the sound I got from rotating the microphone cover around the microphone itself (a squeal that when drenched in reverb created a choral texture) and how in my second composition I exploited the way that the music editing software glitched when one tried to slow a track down too much (this can be heard at the end). In fact, my tendency in computer music was never to use the technology in precisely the way it was supposed to be used: it was to push that technology to the point where it broke and produced new – and quite broken-sounding – sounds, or, if it broke on its own, to use that. I don't know precisely what this says about me, but it certainly says something.

Being the TA for Other Minds was perhaps the most fulfilling thing I have done while at Hampshire. As said before, I had often found myself falling into the role of a teacher-student intermediary in my classes: now it was official. Furthermore, the discussion sections that I led really gave me an opportunity to act in the role of teacher, which is a line of work that appeals to me and may someday become my own. Being able to lead my students to understanding was amazing. In regards to their final project I opted for a hand-off approach: being there if they needed me, but otherwise leaving all



the planning and implementation up to them. I am very proud of the fact that my group produced what was, in my opinion, one of the most coherent and informed presentations in the class. There were several times when I doubted myself, and beat myself up for failing as a TA in one way or another – by misinforming them, by not using class time effectively, etc. But overall I am quite proud. Beyond the Taing, I also learned much from the course itself, which was exciting.

A philosophical problem that made itself apparent to me during this class related to operational definitions. Operational definitions are the definitions one gives for things and concepts so that one can investigate them systematically: in science, so that one can perform experiments. I think a similar notion exists within philosophy, where terms are given formal definitions so that they can be used clearly. However, this presents a problem: after all, what we're looking to investigate is usually not some invented things or concept, but some actual thing or concept we encounter or have. How do we know that our operational definition captures what we're trying to investigate? (What does that even mean?) For example, psychologists study intelligence, and come up with certain conclusions about it. Insofar as what they mean by "intelligence" is the strictly defined thing they were studying, their conclusions cannot be objected to - but also seem rather pointless, with no real application to understanding intelligence. Similarly in philosophy, one can define "mind" in such a way that solving one's problems becomes trivially easy: but is this really capturing what this "mind" is that we're trying to understand? (Of course, one must ask, what do our concepts consist of anyway?)

The Amherst class on Kant was a peculiar experience. It was one of the few times in my academic career where I have felt disliked by a teacher. Of course, this may have been simply because he wanted to let other students in the class talk. I honestly do not know exactly how much I got out of this class: as has often been the case for me, encountering the new philosophical ideas felt more like finding out that someone else had had the same idea I had than discovering something I hadn't thought of. This may be because Kant is so thoroughly entrenched in our way of conceiving of philosophical issues, but as this has frequently occurred when I've read some philosopher I hadn't before, I like to think it's evidence of some sort of talent for philosophy. Of course, I did get a much deeper understanding of the

issues involved, and still find myself influenced by, if not completely agreeing with, Kant's idea of the way in which we as subjects must bring something into our experience in order to structure it. Overall, though, I am sceptical of the way Kant approached philosophy, as being rather too speculative.

And now, we turn to The Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. This may be the most influential class in my academic career thus far. Once again, I did often feel that Wittgenstein was speaking to some inkling I had had, but when that inkling bloomed in what he said, it was impossible to go back. There is very little now that I feel I can take for granted, and I've often considered whether philosophy is even a worthwhile enterprise. As I've often remarked, a young philosopher should not have their first contact be with Wittgenstein, as their fledgling philosophical tendencies could not survive. I think the attitude I got the most out of Wittgenstein is that many philosophical problems cease to exist if we can merely figure out a new way of looking at them – which is no easy task! That is, if we can change our point of view, our way of talking about them (or perhaps just really look at how we are talking about them) they become no more perplexing than anything else. My favorite quote from the PI, one that sums up how a perspective change can dissolve a problem and show the needlessness of a dilemma, is that in regards to pain "it is not a Something, but it is not a Nothing either": that is, the problem isn't whether it does or doesn't exist, it's that talking about it as a thing that does or doesn't exist pollutes our whole investigation. Also worrying me is the indeterminacy of rules. There's also an observation I've made about the PI that I've found influential in my own thought, which I would put as a general point that if one cannot say anything by a negation, then one cannot say anything by an affirmation either. Yet, all this is assuming that the PI is making substantive philosophical claims: might it just be a critique of philosophy itself, putting forward these claims as examples of why things don't have to be the way philosophy says they are? The real, substantive contribution Wittgenstein has made to me is, in fact, hard to put into words, as it is more of an attitude than any particular idea.

Spring 2012

Unfortunately, I didn't pick up much of the practice of Zen from *Decoding Zen Buddhism*: to do so would entail actually practicing. What I did get out of it was

yet more emphasis on the way that looking at things from a new perspective can make problems disappear. I also received a substantive philosophical idea from the study of Hua-Yen towards the beginning of the course. Hua-Yen sees everything as interconnected, and that things are only what they are insofar as they are part of the whole. In fact, an identity can be shown between the part and the whole, for without the part, the whole would be something different (some other whole) and without the whole, the part wouldn't be a part of anything. Where this idea (in combination with Wittgenstein) led my thought is to the doctrine that something cannot exist independently. More generally, a thing (used in the loosest sense of the term) is only what it is by virtue of its relationship to other things. Definitions, concepts, objects, etc. only exist in a web, given meaning or existence by the way in which they connect to other things in that web. The simplest example of how this is the case is in the case of objects: an object that doesn't interact with other objects is indistinguishable from one that simply does not exist. In fact, one could argue that the idea of interactions and connections are at least if not more fundamental than that of things.

Of note, incidentally, early in this class (during the discussion of Hua-Yen) I had what can only be de-

scribed as a spiritual experience. (I do not know how much the experience was in fact influenced by the class, as many of the details of the experience went against what I was learning). Peculiarly, although I describe it as a spiritual experience, it was entirely materialistic: it did not put anything into the world other than what was before me. There was, for example, no God: in fact, there was no room for God in the dense, buzzing world around me. The experience arose while during an episode of star-gazing. I was contemplating how inconceivably far away the stars are, when I decided to focus my attention back on earth. I felt the grass around me, and, as I did so, I felt that I could feel the way in which it stretched as a mass away from me, and connected with the soil that was also connected with the trees in the distance. I was, incidentally, not on any sort of drugs. Anyway, I felt how the world stretched away from me as one whole: yet, at the same time, I became aware of how each individual blade of grass existed, and how in their structure there was complexity as incomprehensible as the distance of the stars. This is why there was no God: for where would it exist within all the stuff contained within a blade of grass, and if it could not exist within something so small, how could it exist anywhere? Instead, everything was exactly as it was in and of itself. This feeling lasted for quite a while, even as I got up and, in a daze, walked back to my dorm. Touching things around me, it was as if I could feel the entire history and growth of everything from a tree to a stone bench to the stair railings in the library (and these things also conveyed to me the way in which they emerged from the web of the universe as a whole). I do not think anything useful can be derived from this experience, as it is my personal experience and could be quite delusional, saying nothing about the way the world actually is, but it is still quite interesting.

I audited Philosophy of Sensation and Perception, as I was deeply interested in the subject matter but did not feel I could handle to workload of 5 classes. As such, I did most of the readings and showed up for most of class discussions, but did not do any assignments. This class got me thinking a little more deeply about my opposition to qualia and spectrum inversion, and how to reconcile that opposition with other philosophical doctrines I did accept. Also in this class a remark was made by one of the students that had bugged me ever since, which was along the lines that personal experience is the most reliable form of knowledge. It struck me that this was a very odd sort of statement to make, and even



submitted by Jesse Ditkoff

odder was that it does represent a sort of philosophical orthodoxy. The fact is, however, that we only view personal experience as being a reliable form of knowledge insofar as it is veridical, by which we in practice we mean that it agrees with consensus. If someone is judged to be psychotic, for example, then their personal experience is not a reliable source of knowledge at all. So the idea that personal experience is the most reliable source of knowledge strikes me as something that must be wrong. Furthermore, this isn't merely a theoretical issue: many errors in judgement are perpetuated by the notion that the individual's experience is the ultimate judge of truth: i.e. "I don't care what the data say, I know what I experienced". (Incidentally, what does it mean to "know that I have such-and-such an experience?" After all, if we view experience as something we have special and infallible access to, it wouldn't be possible to have an experience and not know it, or believe I have an experience but be mistaken. In fact, if our access to personal experience is infallible, "I know that I have such-and-such an experience" doesn't seem to express any more information than "I have such-and-such an experience". All it does is act as an emphasis (much like the emphasis of "THIS" in "no one can have THIS pain!".)

Probability and Causation was wonderful. More influential for me than the Bayesianism was the problems I was exposed to, particularly the Quine-Duhem problem, where we cannot test a hypothesis directly but only in conjunction with other hypotheses. How, then, do we determine that a test disproves the hypothesis in questions or one of the auxiliary hypotheses we are relying upon?

One of my worries throughout the class was with the nature of the philosophy of science itself: are we making descriptive claims about how scientists do, in fact, work, or are we making prescriptive claims about how they should work?

I don't have much to say about Ancient Philosophy, except to say that I really didn't find it that interesting and therefore unfortunately did not put good effort into it, getting the worst grade I've even gotten. One idea that did come out of my reading of Socrates is a pos-

sible argument for the good intentions behind every action: more specifically, I developed an argument that said that not only does everyone desire what is good (as Socrates asserts), but that everyone desires the general good, however they may conceive it.

Ethics was fascinating. I particularly enjoyed learning more about the details of Kantian ethics, of which I had previously been rather dismissive, but now feel that there is something essentially right about, although Kant failed to derive a working theory. I also was impressed with Peter Singer.

That, then, ends my discussion of my classes. Of course, most of my development at Hampshire had not been in the context of classes, but outside of them: in discussions, debates, student groups, etc. (Even in class, the problems that really took a hold of me came not from the course material but from my fellow students. I have often found that the problems that really take hold of me often start with a seemingly insignificant comment by someone else, one which suddenly strikes me as in some way odd. I would say that I'm less interested in the philosophical problems of philosophers than I am in those evidenced by the discourse of everyday people – even if those people are unaware of the problem. [Of course, the philosophical problems of philosophers often must be solved.] In fact, what concerns me the most, more than any particular philosophical problem, is finding a way in which people can discuss clearly the issues concerning them to come to some sort of consensus.) I've found myself involved in various areas of students governance (although I am uncertain how), and have benefited greatly from that experience. And most importantly, I have had a chance to figure out who I am as a person – only a chance, for I still have no clue who I am.

So that is my retrospective. [put in some final points] Beyond that, the only thing I can think of to say is that when I entered Hampshire I felt that I was rather bright, and now I feel profoundly stupid. And that is perhaps the greatest accomplishment of all.

A WORLD SAVED

by Zilong Wang

Should I go to law school on a full-tuition scholarship? I used to say to myself that this is a no-brainer. Really, what do I have to lose? Law school opens so many doors, and a JD title sounds quite impressive --- especially back home in China. And I don't even have to pay a dime! Isn't it an idiot-proof option?

Or so I thought. And I was indeed a full idiot for thinking like that.

An hour ago, I realized that I have a lot to lose. In fact, I --- a property-less, almost-penniless young man --- have a whole world to lose! That world is a world of possibilities, a world that COULD BE. As a 21-year-old young man, the greatest cost in my life is the opportunity cost --- the cost of big dreams, of unlimited potential. And I will not trade them for anything else.

This is not an argument against law school, but an argument for following the heart. Over the past few months, I have been trying to convince myself to choose the law school path. But my heart has always known the right answer. Even my stomach knows it --- the thought of being in law school, of being required to do things for which I have no passion, makes my stomach hurt.

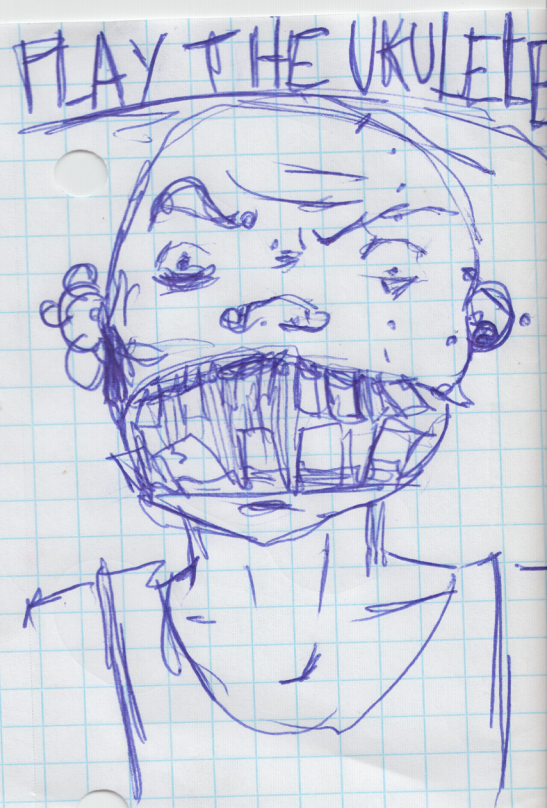
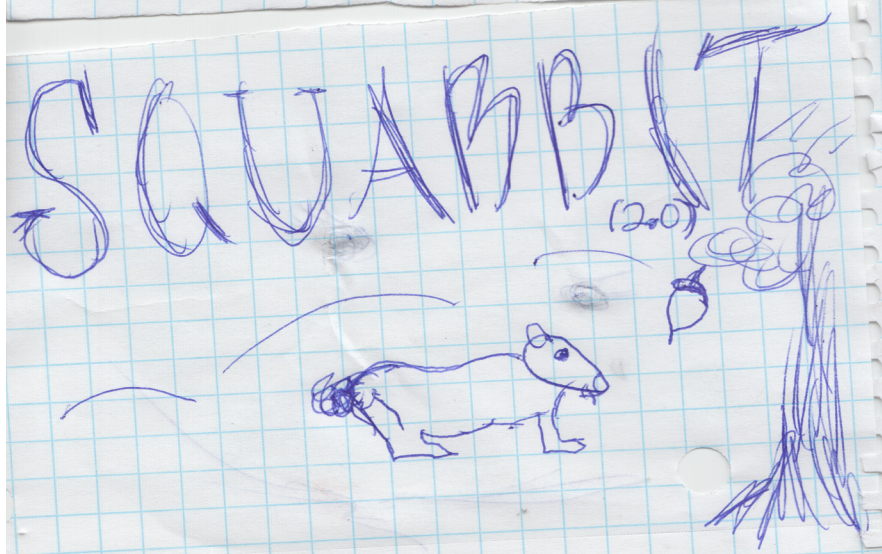
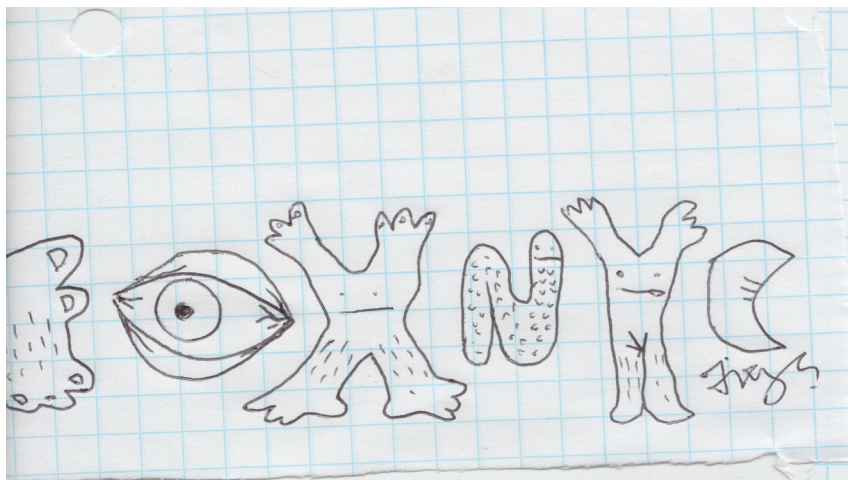
I have asked many people whether or not I should go to law school. Almost everyone said yes. Interestingly, those people who barely know me are the ones who immediately decided that I should go. "Because it is a useful degree," they'd insist.

When semi-strangers all rush to that conclusion, it rings an alarm. If all stock analysts say "buy," then I should certainly sell. Those who recommended law school to me would recommend it to just about anyone. But I do not intend to be "anyone." I know who I am. Law school is not where my heart lies, and those legal skills are not what I need. I will hire a lawyer when I need one. There are plenty of good ones to go around. The world does not need one more lawyer. We need more crazy minds, fearless souls and entrepreneurial spirit. Which I'd be honored to provide.

An old little pamphlet ends with this, "the proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win." Tonight, as a young "proletarian", I realized that if I don't follow my heart, I have a whole world to lose. Once lost, that world would never come back.

I am glad that I have saved that world --- a world not yet imagined, waiting to be born. Tonight, I celebrate its conception.







What I did With My Summer Vacation

By F. STEWART-TAYLOR
AGE 20 $\frac{3}{4}$

MAY: Applied for jobs? Got a job?

JUNE: Worked in fast food? Did STAND-UP Comedy? HAD IMPROV

~~July~~ PRACTICE? MADE NEW Friends?

July: Got fired from fast food job. Did an improv show? Hated Myself. Cried most nights.

AUGUST: HATED Myself. HAD IMPROV PRACTICE. Got yelled at by comedians. Cried. Repressed Unrequited affection. Walked to Hampshire. DID Really Angry Standup about Genitals. Scratched an X into my hand with a knife. Did Angry Standup about Women's rights. Painted some Open covers. Wrote a sketch about STRONG female Characters. Cried in front of my Housemates.

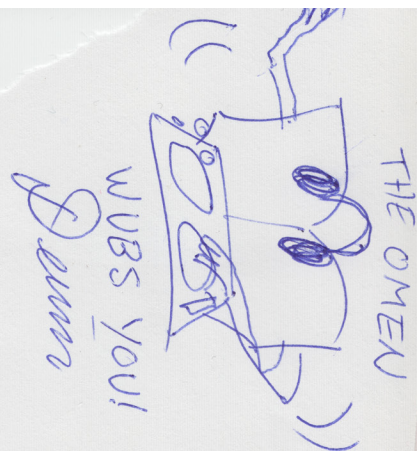
~~September~~

SEPTEMBER: Back to school.

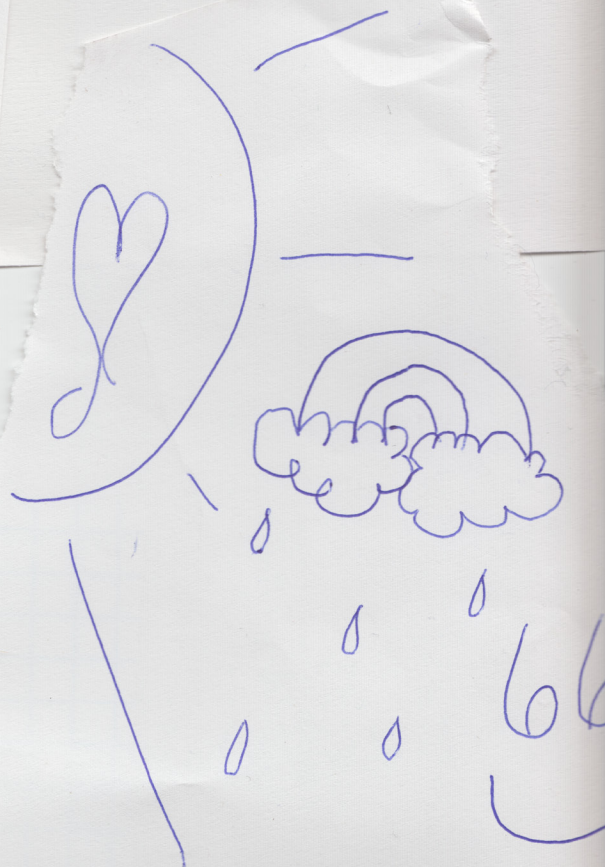


hey hey hey,

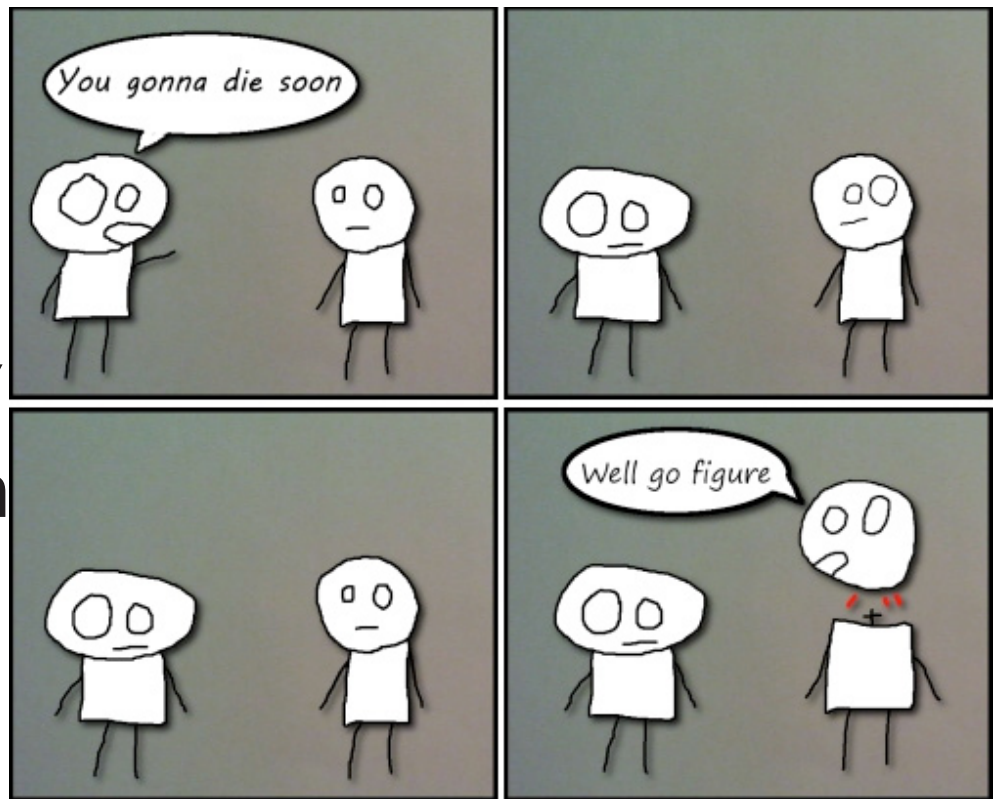
I knew the dog that
fucked my mom. He left
behind myself. Now I
hate and cannot see,
that all I need is help.



NO.



What I Did With My Summer Vacation



By
Jonathan
Gardner

SECTION

THE LAMP POST by Nathan Savoy

I knew it was going to be a strange case when the commissioner walked into my office. It had been raining all day—it always rained when the commissioner visited and right now I was watching a couple soaked souls walking the streets through my grime-encrusted window. Commissioner's bristly mustache and stubble walked into my office, followed by the body he'd honed through years of sitting on his ass while I did the hard work. He barely fit through the door. I could feel him lookin' at me, even though he was still wearing his sunglasses. It was nine at night in Seattle. I work late. You have to, in a job like this... the scum doesn't stop to have a glass of warm milk so neither can I.

"Jack, the department needs you." His voice was just as oiled with corruption as it was the day he kicked me off the force ten years ago. I eyed my empty coffee mug, stared at the soggy grains for a bit. I wished he'd sent his secretary, Phyllis, instead. She was a real looker—long legs, nice waist and a cute face. A real looker.

"Yeah?" My voice sounded like I'd been chewing gravel, but it was just the cigarettes. I took up smoking after the war.

"I know things have been touch-and-go, Jack, but you must have seen the news. Whole city is going dark. We need your help."

Sure I'd seen the news. Some twisted son of a bitch had been driving through Seattle late at night and crashing into lampposts. More than two hundred had been destroyed in the past week alone. It was the work of a mad man, for sure, but what kind of mad man was the question I was asking myself.

The commissioner was trying to look me in the eyes, I could feel it. I have a sixth sense about these things. Once, when I was growing up and working at the docks, I stopped a murder just because I could tell that one guy was looking at the other wrong. It's that

sort of skill that makes a good P.I. It's also the kind of skill that not everyone has. I have it. It's why I'm a good private eye... that, and the two revolvers that I keep in separate drawers, just in case.

"Jack, we think you can track him down—will you do it?" I stared him down. Men like the commissioner are scum, but I needed the money. He broke first. "We'll double your usual fee." I was glad he said that. I knew that he was on the mob's payroll, and I also knew that the lack of streetlights was choking organized crime. The whole city was too dark for muggers, and in some places it was so pitch black that men were picking up dames on the corner just to return them and demand a refund after gettin' 'em in the light. Bad day to be a bad guy, good day to be me—a good guy with a bad past.



"Okay, I'll do it. What've you got?" The commissioner would have smiled, if he'd been the smiling type. We have that in common. I haven't smiled since my partner died.

"We haven't been able to nail this guy's pattern. His motion around the city is completely erratic. One night his spree is linear, and ends with all the street-lights around a flea market. The next night he's doing zigzags around my men, from the cotton ball factory all the way to the goddamn museum of natural history. He's a damn mad man."

"What kind of mad man?"

"We don't know."

"That's what I was afraid of." I paused to light a cigarette and take a long drag. It tasted like the fucking coffee. In this job, that's no surprise—when you've been in the trade this long, everything has a bitter aftertaste. "Do you have anything at all?"

"One lead. A guy named Johnny Baats. He bartends at The Bloody Stool."

"That's a hell of a place, Commissioner." I'd only been in twice before, both times chasing leads on the mob boss who killed my wife. The leads had lost their water at that bar, and I'd gotten my nose rearranged twice for asking the wrong questions. I just hoped that this time it wouldn't be my jaw.

"You're a hell of a guy, Jack." Commissioner was wearing his lying face, but I knew that he was telling more truth than he thought. I'm a hell of a guy. You have to be, to get this close to the city's demons without getting burned.

When I walked in, The Bloody Stool was in the middle of living up to its name. I watched two big bastards pummeling some chump who hadn't paid his tab, or maybe said the wrong things to one of their dames. Johnny was at the bar. I had my .32 in my belt and my .45 under my shoulder, but my 20/20 said that the thugs in here were packing real heat. Probably holding hollow point rounds—"cop killers"—they eat through body armor like I go through cigarettes.

"No good to tangle here, better tread lightly," I thought. I always do in a place where the floors are drenched in sin that you might get stuck. I walked up to the bar.

"Johnny Baats?" He was fresh-faced and handsome. Didn't look the type to be working at a place like this.

"Yes?" His voice was clear. He didn't drink on the job. I respect that.

"I'll have a four closure." It was a drink that had gained popularity in the middle class during the depression: one parts gin, one parts rum, one part whisky and a splash of absinthe. Absinthe had been all the rage when I had been on the force, but I thinking about the force makes me think about my partner, Frank, and now wasn't a good time to start thinking about Frank. Baats nodded his head, and brought me the drink.

"You're old school, huh?"

"Old as a guy can get in my line of work."

"And what's your line of work?" Kid was a quick one; I'll give him that.

"I'm a private eye." I could feel a lot of the eyes in the room settle on my back. If people could stare daggers, I'd be in a room full of Macbeths. I have a sixth sense about these things, but I knew I had to go on my hunch.

"Dangerous line of work in a place like this. How can I help you, Mr. Private Eye?"

"I need information."

"Your type usually does." Somewhere behind me I heard another poor bastard's head get bashed in by a pool cue. Reminded me of my time in the service. He was certainly quick.

"What do you know about the cat who's been driving around destroying street lights?" His eyes looked around quick. He was scared. I looked around too, but I was lucky. When I mentioned the crime that was keeping half of these thugs unemployed, they didn't look too ready to defend their barkeep.

"I don't know shit, man, I just sell drinks."

"The light outside your bar was hit two days ago."

"I don't know shit." I leaned in real close, grabbed him by his neck and slammed him against the bar. His handsome face was busted something fierce.

"City's dark, son, and I'm gonna need something better than 'I don't know shit'."

"Fine! Fine! He was in here a few days ago, flitting around like he owned the place, flying from table to table and he was staring at the candles, you know? Like he was some kind of pyro. He said he's going to hit 5th and 92nd tonight, that's all I know, I swear!"

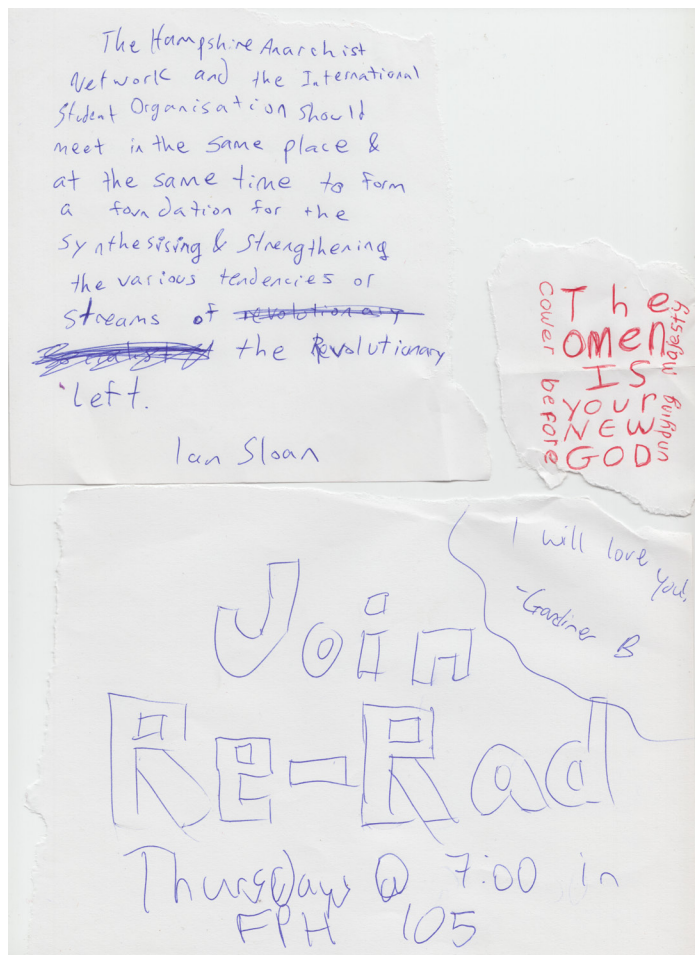
"Thanks." I let go of him, and dropped some money on the table. Then I headed back to my car by way of a payphone and rang the commissioner.

There are nights when your car can't go fast enough. This was one of those nights. The rain was still coming down, hard. I was speeding, but sometimes the right side of the law isn't the right place to be to catch a crook. The streets were dark except for my headlights, and the lights of a car ahead of me. It was dinged up, and it looked like both fenders were missing. I yanked my radio off of its perch in the front and barked into it.

"Commissioner, I'm on him." The response crackled through.

"Do what you need to do to catch him!" That was enough for me. I floored it. The old girl gave a tired chug, shifted gears, and took off. The mad man in front of me was a damn good driver. He weaved through the pitch-black city streets like a demon. I knew what I had to do. This bastard had taken down almost every light in the city, but not the one in front of my office. I came up on his tail, brought myself up on his left and nudged his car, forcing it to turn. He zoomed down the side street I chose, while I followed in hot pursuit. My pistol was still in its holster under my shoulder, and I knew that this time I might need it. Again I pulled along his shoulder, and again I rammed him down another side street. For ten agonizing minutes I ferried our suspect down the right roads, until we were on Graff Street. At the end of Graff, I saw the beacon of hope. A lone streetlight. He bolted for it. I knew he couldn't resist its glow. His car slammed into the pole full-speed. With any luck he would be dazed.

I pulled up behind him and parked my car. I drew my pistol carefully, and approached with every bit of caution I could muster. The police were bringing up the rear, I could hear their sirens, and see their blue and red flashes casting shadows around me. The twisted street lamp flickered and went out. It was wrapped over the perp's bumper. The inside of the car was dark, but I had my flashlight. In one movement I wrenched the driver's side door open, and aimed my light and my gun at the very man I'd been hired to catch. There, looking at me from behind the wheel with panic in his eyes, was the biggest goddamn moth I have ever seen.



Note: I spent thirty days in Madagascar but if I were to write a narrative of those thirty days, it would be a novella. As such, this is only our first day. All of the thoughts I'm writing occurred at some point during the trip, but few of them on the first day. Because I wanted to include them anyway I've taken some liberty with events and shuffled them so that these observations make sense in the context of the narrative. So everything I'm writing happened, but it didn't necessarily happen at the moment it does in the narrative. On the first day, the main thing I thought is "I want sleep". But still, a simple, short view of the lives of folks living in Antananarivo can give you some deep insight as to what it means to be Malagasy, from Madagasikara, and what it means to be a vazaha looking into that life.

Second note: If I swear a lot in this piece, it's because the things I'm talking about are serious enough to warrant shocking, strong language. Children playing with plastic bag kites is at least twenty times more shocking than the word 'fuck' but I can't write what that experience is, I can write 'fuck' (so I do, a lot).

Vazaha's¹ First Day: Madagasikara
Charles Haigh

There was so much to grok, so little to grok from – Stranger in a Strange Land, Robert Heinlen

When we land everybody claps. I am slightly annoyed. Wasn't turbulence or anything scary during the flight. Maybe it's a function of the repairs they made before we took off (could be) or everyone's just happy to be done with the 12 hour ordeal. There was free booze, decent food and good movies on the plane though so it wasn't that bad. Also, while I didn't consider it at the time, that was the last time I'd watch a movie until I was on a plane again, 30 days later.

We're approximately six hours behind schedule. So while we had expected to arrive no later than 10 PM it is currently nearly 4 AM. However, that's in Madagascar time (a concept distinct from Malagasy Time) so I don't really have any clue what our internal schedule is like. Except that I don't sleep well on planes and didn't sleep on that one, so I was tired. But it was exciting, so. There are approximately forty billion grasshoppers in the airport. There are also four-inch wide hawk-moths swooping around, which I think are fucking amazing. We quickly

¹Vazaha [Pronounced Fha-zha] translated exactly means "foreigner" but in actual use means something more like "white person". This was the first Malagasy word I learned.

no idea what an appropriate amount of money is. I hand the lady at the money changer 40 USD. She twiddles at a calculator and shows it to me. Its one of those older, cheap solar powered ones, where the display screen is tilted up at an angle (we'll see lots of calculators just like this one). This screen says '80 800' and I smile and nod, because I have no idea of whether that's right or appropriate or whatever (it was). She hands me eight 10 000 ariary notes and four 200. It's not at all like American money. They're all colorful, and clearly newly minted. The 10 000 has what appears to be a dump truck driving on a rainbow road to some cut outs of happy people at the end, no idea. Its also about ¼ bigger than an American bill. The 200 however is tiny, and appears to have two lemurs sitting at a table taking tea at it. No clue. We and our followers move into the parking lot, through a haze of grasshoppers. There's two big vans (later learn they're called *Mazdas* regardless of actual brand) and some new people. We're sitting in these cars and they're swarmed with people. Everyone, everyone is holding their hands out. In this universal sign, give me money: for food, for clothes, for a new ox, for some rum or some cigarettes or for who the fuck knows what. And we all feel guilty because we're not helping them. What the fuck would that mean? What do we know about what they need, what world they should live in? Us high-up white folk show up and reshape the world and call it development, call it fucking improvement without ever knowing for a second what would give people a good life. What's a good life? One like yours or mine, where everyone has two goddamn TVs, a car in the driveway and a computer? Where the fuck is it written that that's good? How can we help if we don't even know whether we should, if we don't even know what helping means? Or maybe I'm just a prick, and I don't want to give up a few bucks and need an excuse for it. Who the fuck knows.

Since I just got off a plane from France and America, I'm not surprised to see a white guy

learn that Richard is afraid of flying insects, however, so he's not excited about them. Since there's so little artificial light used in and around Tana, the airport is fucking incendiary, which accounts for the (minimum) fifty-five billion flying dudes.

We wait in line for approximately three and a half times as long as it took a chilled snail to move the distance. I say near the beginning that we should be at the hotel by 6, someone turns around and says we'll be lucky to be *close* to customs by then. I'm wrong, they're right. This will be the first of many such occasions (me being wrong AND things taking forever). Line didn't look that long, but it was. So we stand in line for two and a half hours. I'm a bit twitchy because I drank like five cups of coffee and four beers on the plane, nearly everyone else however is either grumpy or just tired. It'll hit me soon enough. We chat, maybe jog about. Don't really do anything. Do just now realize I don't speak more than ten words of French and until this day didn't know that the word for the language was 'Malagasy'.

Customs is nothing. Hand the guy my passport and hand him my slip of paper with entry information. He's uninterested and waves me through. We wait for bags for a while, and of course immediately people working there grab all of them and put them on carriages for us. This will be the first of many occasions on which I was not able to carry my own bag even though I wanted to. They look sad and make some tip-hand motions. Five dollars passes to every one of them. We soon learn that 5 American dollars is 10,000 Ariary, the largest Malagasy note and accepted at very few places that sell things (usually don't have that much change). Of course, 5 dollars would've still seemed high to me in America. They did move twenty bags about three feet each. And we hadn't been to the country yet, we didn't have a sense of... scale, yet.

We get some money changed, about ten airport employees in tow moving our shit. I have

I don't know. After a week or two I'm very surprised to see a white guy I don't know, but this isn't then yet. He's Mitch Irwin, we'd all heard about him, and he'd be driving with us to the hotel. He's been here, living, for a while, so he knows what's what. I ask him what most of the people like to eat. He says "Well, they like to eat rice for every meal if they can, but a lot of people can't afford that". If that doesn't make you feel like shit I don't know what would. Somebody says most people live off of less than a dollar a day.

We talk about poverty in these abstract numbers like that means anything to us. "Most of the country lives off less than a dollar a day" "The GDP per capita increased at a rate 6% less than the rest of sub-Saharan Africa". This means nothing to us, who've never known poverty. I've come closer than most of the people I traveled with (not all of them, but most), and for me poverty meant nothing. It meant my house had fewer computers in it, older TVs, and we never left the country. Here poverty means-- well like I said, I don't know. Living in a bamboo shack filled with chicken shit with giardia infested water and rice every day if you're lucky. And that last isn't a joke or an exaggeration. If you're *lucky* there's rice three meals a day. Most of the time a couple of those meals are nothing but this sweet potato. It's not our nice, fancy-ass sweet potatoes, it's pure mass. Like filling your stomach with fucking cardboard, just so it's full of something. We just can't talk about poverty in any real sense, any more than we can hope to talk about living on the moon. We can imagine it, we can try our best. But we don't know it, most of us have just never experienced anything like it, us folk who have so rarely brushed with hardship. I-vory fucking towers, man.

It's now about sunrise, but still dark. We get in the vans and start to drive... really fast. In fact, driving is horrifying. I have to stop watching the road after about five minutes because I'm

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gonna scream with terror. You drive 60km through the city and dodge pedestrians which pass casually through the road, and the most insane density of mopeds and bikes imaginable, all going opposite the traffic and through it and perpendicular to it and sliding under it like in an action movie. Not really the last one.

We see rice paddies and people rolling down the hills on big carts with water barrels on them. People selling fried food and two-day old meat and cell phones and clothes and rice. People carrying everything on their heads, four-foot wide plastic bags filled with some mysterious yellow foam cubes are everywhere. There are buildings like you'd see in the US. I saw something called a Shop-rite. However there were also about twenty shacks clinging to the Shop-rite's side like barnacles. They were wood or dirt and had thatch or or tin roofs. Some of them had people inside, some had zebu and some had great big piles of wood. This is the same everywhere. Nice buildings immediately border the not-so-nice. There don't seem to be nice neighborhoods, merely buildings which have walls surrounding them and barbed wire on top of those walls. Sometimes the barbed wire is broken glass worked into the top of the wall. We arrive alive, at, surprisingly a walled building. This is the hotel, and our entry into Antananarivo.

The hotel is lovely, I'm sure (when we came back later I appreciated it a lot more). But I'd just spent about 35 hours in near-absolute misery so I didn't give a single hunk of rabbit shit (especially not the kind they re-eat). We get there at about 7 and are told that there'll be a lecture at 12. I say "well, not gonna bother sleeping then". There's a computer in the hallway near our room (shared rooms all the way; which is actually better, feeling alone here would be a bit scary). Immediately people load on to it to use facebook. I get settled into the room, lay down and start reading aaaaaand... immediately pass out until 12:30.

easy for a tiny minority of the world to control the lives of an enormous majority. And beyond that, a world where this dichotomy isn't only ever-present, it's nearly infuckingscapable. I'm writing this on this goddamn computer that was made for fucking pennies by some tireless Chinese factory worker, sitting in clothes made in a Vietnamese sweatshop, on a chair-- well this chair seems to have been made by the Amish, so they're probably alright. And yes, I could grow my own cotton and weave my own cloth and sew my own clothes, but even if I or a few people did that, it would be irrelevant. The system is thus: you buy your clothes from a store, which gets them from nothing-paid third-world workers. And as long as that's the *system*, that's how things are fucking done, that's what's *normal*, the problem is still there, no matter how many *individuals* escape it.

Whatever, though, eat the food anyway. It's, as I said, fucking delicious. Laurie gives a little verbal presentation on diversity of Malagasy fauna, extinction, and some evolutionary/geology context to understand it all in. We eat and safety is discussed, always walk around with others, always watch your pockets. No one is in particular out to get us, but we are among the only vahaza about, and to most people that means money. Rightly so, I might add. When we later went out to eat at a pizza place with some Malagasy uni students (who have to have some money, uni's expensive) we find ourselves eating and them not. Nobody says it, but it's probably because this food's too expensive for them. That was the four-thousand, nine-hundred and sixty-second time I felt like shit because of money on the trip.

We ask about beer, we *are* college students after all. We're told THB (in French) is the big thing, and we remember seeing a place across the street advertising it (by advertising, I mean the entire building was THB-Red, and covered with ten-foot tall horseheads (the THB sigil). So a

Someone wakes me up, tells me it's time to have lunch and listen to a lecture. Tolerable. I up and go down stairs. There's a beautiful spread. I have no idea what the food is now, that's over a month ago (a particularly long month), but I do remember it was awesome. Everyone sitting, as well as Mitch, and five Malagasy folks we haven't seen before. They're introduced Jean-Luc, Mitch's research partner, three students from the University de Antananarivo, and a professor from the same. Someone looks at the table and comments how bad they feel for the folks who will have to put out this much food for this many people for a while. I say it's just a party, shit happens. But that reeks of bullshit to me once the words slip out.

Makes you think for a second about what a job really means, and what it is to be the person giving a job and the person doing a job. I think very casually "Well, that's their job, they eat all the dishes and cook all the food for us vahaza. I've been a dishwasher, that's a shit job, it happens." Having a shit job is one thing, cleaning 10 people's clothes for four dollars is another. What way is this okay, because it's 'just a job'? Sure that construct is common to us, but communism is not synonymous with rightness. There's all sorts of structures that were at some point very common, but that we now look a bit awry at (the Greeks liked to fuck little boys' leached thighs", and it was considered pretty fucking normal). So what does it mean that we can't ask in and make basically 95% of people in sight do almost any job we want, just because we don't have enough money? How the fuck can anything resembling liberty, fraternity, or equality exist when that sort of construct is in place? We are the managers, three-quarters the world our managers. Maybe it's time for a revolution. Just like with most of this shit, however, individuals are rarely to blame. It wasn't wrong of us to hire people to do decent jobs, nor was it wrong for them

couple of us mosey on over, out of the hotel and it's walls, to get a drink or two. The hotel opens onto this narrow alley, just barely big enough for the mazdas to get in. Tana smells like diesel and wood fire, without exception. It's also built on a massive ridge, so slopes galore. We walk out of the alley on the main streets, our little tourist wallets hanging from our necks and bulging under our shirts. Thankfully this doesn't scream tourist at all to any of these folks, white skin is in general enough for that. As we walk, a few small children point and scream "Vahaza!". Not a scared scream, more an excited and surprised one. Like if you happened to see a sixty-foot wide peach growing from a tree in your yard. We don't know this word yet, though, so we basically ignore them. Hands are held out for money, none are filled. Some folks try to sell us things; maps and blankets and necklaces and carrots and surge protectors and soccer balls and brooms.

When we get out onto the main street it's sunny. The alley was closed in with buildings so it wasn't. There are old cars, and new ones of brands I've never seen choking the roadway and parked at its sides. People don't really walk on the sidewalk. Sometimes they do. Between the sidewalk and the road in a lot of places there's an open drainage ditch. Sometimes there's a bridge of flagstone to use, sometimes there's not and sometimes you really don't want to use that bridge. We step over into the street and see vendors selling everything at the side of the road. Swarms of beige, old model taxis. Mazdas filled to the fucking brim with Malagasy. A kind of a mini bus, three rows of three seats and a driver's bench. Each seat has maybe four people in it. Not each row, each seat. Someone hangs out the back door on a strip of nylon (maybe a cut-out seatbelt, which wouldn't work anyway), holding it somewhat shut and shouting out where the 'taxi-brousse' is headed.

There's a dumpster on the side of the road, filled with putrefying food and waste plastic.

There's at least four children digging through it purposefully. This won't be the last of that. There are children everywhere, generally with snotty noses and often with bare feet. You think black Africans, but not really. The Malagasy are originally Austroneasian, probably by way of India and later Bantu migrants came from east Africa. The coloring and appearance of the Malagasy reflect this. Some have the straight, light hair, small features and nearly red-black skin that makes you think of native Australians. Some are so black they're nearly blue, heads shaved or covered in tight curls. So while I'm about twenty times as light-skinned as everyone there, very few faces look the same.

On the way we get sidetracked down another alley. Someone asks us (with gestures, very few people speak English in Tana and none of us spoke French or Malagasy) whether we want a drink. We say yes and he points to a building. It was a bar however, and not a place to just buy a bottle. A bar cramped with locals. That was a little too uncomfortable so we wave it off and say no thanks as best we can. Everyone inside looked friendly, and were probably pleasantly tipsy. But as we leave the guy who showed us there starts to follow us and gestures where we ought to go. We shake our heads and walk away. But he follows for a while anyway, eventually giving up.

And everywhere fear. We're afraid of these people, and maybe they're afraid of us too. I don't know. Some of it is foreignness, yes, the new is always frightening. Some of it just not speaking the language, sure. But really, it was pure fear of the alien, the other. So while children may have shouted vazaha [Stranger, White Person], and we never said anything of the kind, we still built our aliens, our foreigners, our *others* all around us. We say things like 'It can be dangerous, just like any where' and in the same moment say 'Don't go out alone, walk with a group'. In the middle of the capitol in the middle of the day, something you'd just about never say

smile and a shy wish that everyone enjoy themselves, and the food. Her husband smokes in the back and writes in journals and fixes his car. Her son stands near the front gate and opens it with insane speed when you get close. So much so that you are slightly embarrassed and blush while saying thanks. He cleans his father's car with a rag, and plays with his younger brother. The young boy loves dragon ball Z, and watches far too much French Cartoon Network. He yelled Kaaaaameeee haaaaameeee haaaaaa! And punched me in the gut at least twenty times. In general, I would catch him and throw him over my shoulder. Or else take the horrid blow and die on the floor. He chatters at the absolutely highest speed imaginable at all times to us, despite the fact that not a single one of us understands a word. His name is Danny. And his mother apologizes in the most matronly way imaginable, saying he is crazy (adaladala in Malagasy) and nervous. I tell her my nephew is a similar age and she asks if he is as nervous. I say he is angry instead.

Most other places in the country the barrier to the outside is invisible. Here at least it is honest, there is a literal wall where some folks (usually white folks) can walk in and no one else (usually Malagasy) cannot. This place exists in front of the other hotels we stay in, and in front of the entrances of nice restaurants. There was even a tourist shop with a gateway barrier. The second you step out of many of these places, you are covered in people selling things, taxi drivers and rickshaw pullers. This barrier is weird and often hard to see, but it's absolutely there.

We're told when we get back that it's time to go to the university. Its about ten minutes straight up the hill. We pass many people who are surprised to see vazaha. And many stands of fly-covered meat, and something that looks like (but is not) cut up elephant trunk. Near the university people wear suits, and American basketball jerseys and it could easily be the US. The buildings look much like Hampshire if it were not tended to for twenty years. They are bare

to a 22 year old in this country. In the same breath of denying otherness, difference (at least in our heads), we felt the need to embrace it. There was a strange, very uncomfortable fear, ever pervasive. We were a country of vazaha surrounded by others. We try to ignore this fact, that there is the self, there are knowns and there are others. These people fall squarely in the last. And of course we wish to avoid that, we try to, but in some ways we always fail. The same is true for them, to them we are and will be for quite some time vazaha. Later I was talking to Mitch about Malagasy names and he says the prefix Ra- is an honorific, something like sir though used rarely. He says that some of the younger people he knows well call him Ramitch sometimes. He's been in Madagascar for a very long time.

We eventually make it to the THB store (which was really very close). And struggle to order. We point at bottles on shelves and hold up fingers. Out of the back of the shop come the bottles, warm with peeling labels. We see another of that cheap calculator when it's time to pay, and when we pull out our 10 000 ariary bills, the guy can't always make change. When he does, the change is dirty to the point of near illegibility. Most of the bills are different colors but these are all hand-dirt brown. The deposit costs just as much as the beer, about a dollar apiece. In this place where glass is expensive the bottle deposit is taken very seriously.

We cross back to the hotel, bottles in tow, and make it into and up the alley without event. We are perhaps slightly shaken, but so exhilarated by the exoticism of the locale and its juxtaposition against something as common as buying beer that we are excited and happy. Also some of us were under 21. Drinking age is not a concept in Madagascar. We go into the hotel and stow the beers in its fridge.

The hotel is called Maison du Pyla, and it is lovely. There is a matron who rules with a

stone and concrete for the most part, brutalist, cheap and effective. Like everywhere in Tana, the campus is festooned with steps and plants burst through every crack. There is what looks like it used to be a large square pond, but is now a damp patch of concrete. We are taken to the collections room, which like Monte Cristo is dead on the outside but teeming with gold (and by gold, I mean bones). We are told by Laurie (who would know) that this is the most impressive lemur bones collection in the world. Some students are doing work with the bones specifically. The rest of us clear out, as the space is small and we do not wish to intrude. We walk around campus and find beautiful, exotic plants and speak to some people, including the Malagasy students who will come with us to the field. A practice called 'the turning of the bones' (or Famadihana) comes up. Folks tend to be buried in above ground tombs. And after a few years of being buried (when the bones are clean) they are removed and involved in festivities celebrating them and their lives, with their extended families. There is music and food and dancing, with the uninterred body looking on. I feel uncomfortable talking about it, because it is so interesting yet seems in many ways sacred. It would be so easy to blunder, I can only say "That is really interesting".

And I'm sitting here feeling like an asshole because I think this dude's *cultural practices* are fucking *interesting*. Like they're some goddamn bug sitting under a microscope and I can zoom in and observe the fucking thickness of its chitin and the curvature of its cephalothorax. *Interest* kills some of the majesty, some of the sacredness of some things. Kinda like when your grandpa shows you his war medals and you call them 'Cool' and he puts them away, real quick like. The shit isn't cool, nor interesting. It has some elevation to all that intellectualism. What we

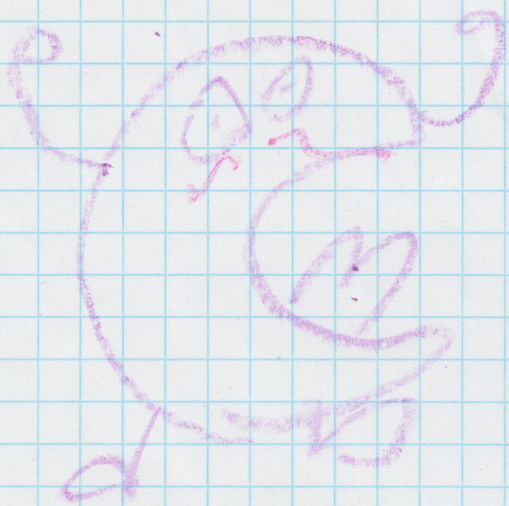
Charles Haigh 13

misses the point. You try to solve the destruction of life and practice by doing exactly that; sterilizing it with academic terms and stilted rules. These are people's lives, which they experience in a very emotional way, just like we do, and we swoop in and look at them through a lens, like penguins or some shit. Our very interest separates us: immediately, profoundly. Keeps us from experience, keeps us from emotional knowledge, and from understanding. A life cannot be observed in that sense, lives are lived. So the sacredness of experience, the sanctity of life is immediately profaned by interest, and trying to conserve it in *equally false, equally academic, equally outside* concepts like 'cultural sensitivity' is just fucking deadening.

But we eventually return to the bone room and to the hotel. We have seen some convergence of worlds; we are of course students and a campus seems to us our domain, yet despite that differences pervade. We eat dinner, again amazing, and retire upstairs. On the roof of the building there is a porch overlooking the city. Because of its layout on a ridgetop, most buildings have beautiful views, if not beautiful places to see them from. We drink the beer (which is good but not surprising) and smoke cigarettes called Boston. We see a gecko, and take pictures of the cityscape and talk about what we've seen and what the trip will be like. We make introductions, since we are finally comfortable. And we talk about the past and our studies and our families and what we hope will happen. The beer runs out and the cigarettes burn down and we see that it is late. It has been a long day, our first in Madagascar, and we are tired. We retire to our beds, though some use the computer again to talk more on facebook. You think Africa and you think hot, but Antananarivo is very high up, and it is winter so it is cool if not cold. We nestle under light blankets and chat quietly with our roommates until all fall asleep.

It has been a long day, with many new things. We have brought a chunk of our world into this one, so we shall remain largely isolated from it. But even through the walls you can get some sense of the world around us and the people and their lives. This is a place unlike any most of us have seen before, certainly myself. A place different yet similar, with poverty and richness, happiness and sadness, crops to plant things to sell and lives to be lived. This was our first day, us of the New World, in the Old World. Though of course Madagascar was inhabited well after the Americas, so perhaps it is itself very much a New World too. Regardless we fall asleep, thinking many thoughts, mostly about tomorrow and a few about what it means to be other, to be vahaza, to belong and to be outside.





Mr. Nobody
moon says Hi!



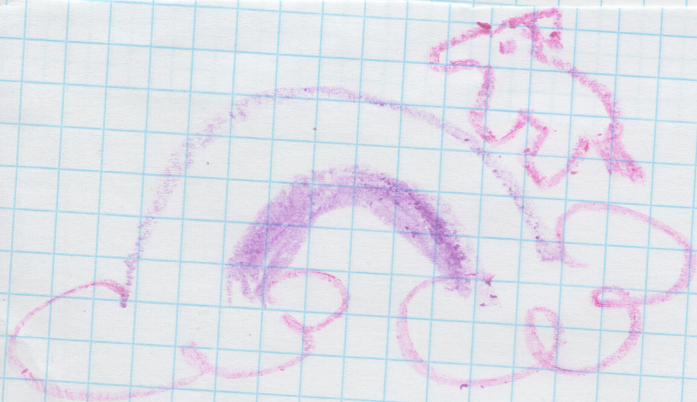
IS The Best!

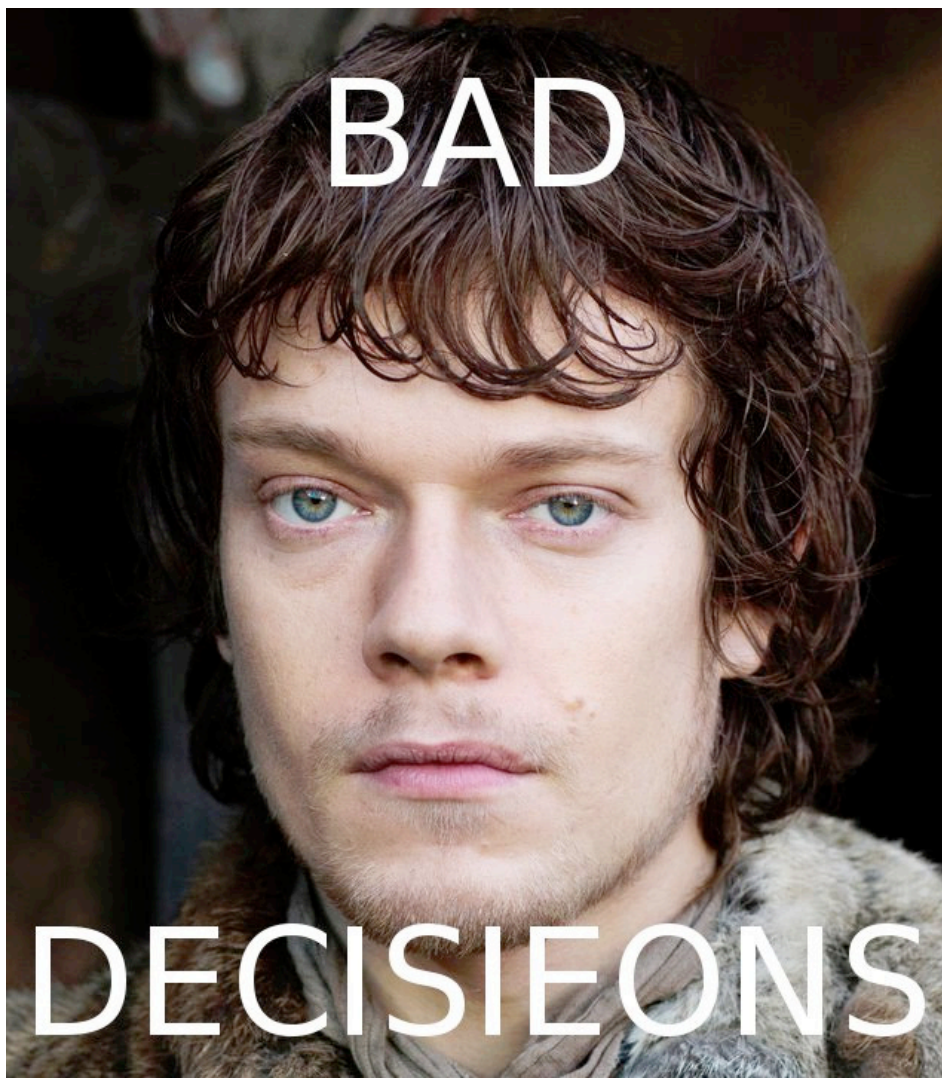
LIFE ~~WAS~~ WAS DARKER THAN A
DARK CLOSET FULL OF HATE.
The DRUG ENTERED my HEART WAS
TOO WORK TO CARRY ITSELF.

BLACK METAL HIPPIE



1880's BUSTLES
ROCK MY SOCKS





This page,
the next page,
and the following
page submitted by
Will Shattuc



Cut along the dotted edge to make your own Christopher Walken mask.

Parents: please supervise younger children.



Hyakumonogatari Kaidankai

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Hyakumonogatari Kaidankai (百物語怪談会, lit., A Gathering of One Hundred Supernatural Tales) was a popular didactic Buddhist-inspired parlour game during the Edo period in Japan.

The game was played as night fell upon the region using three separate rooms. In preparation, participants would light 100 andon in the third room and position a single mirror on the surface of a small table. When the sky was at its darkest, guests gathered in the first of the three rooms, taking turns orating tales of ghoulish encounters and reciting folkloric tales passed on by villagers who claimed to have experienced supernatural encounters. These tales soon became known as kaidan. Upon the end of each kaidan, the story-teller would enter the third room and extinguished one andon, look in the mirror and make their way back to the first room. With each passing tale, the room slowly grew darker and darker as the participants reached the one hundredth tale, creating a safe haven for the evocation of spirits.

However, as the game reached the ninety-ninth tale, many participants would stop, fearful of invoking the spirits they had been summoning.

While the exact origins of Hyakumonogatari Kaidankai are unknown, it was believed that it was first played amongst the samurai class as a test of courage. In Asai Ryōi's 1660 nursery tale "Otogi Monogatari" a version of the game was described in which the narrative tells of several young samurai telling tales in the Hyakumonogatari Kaidankai fashion. In the tale, as one samurai finished the one hundredth tale, he began to extinguish the candle when suddenly he sees a giant gnarled hand descend upon him from above. While some of the samurai cowered in fear, a swipe of his sword revealed the hand to be merely the shadow of a spider.

At first, the game of Hyakumonogatari Kaidankai was popular amongst the aristocratic warrior class, but it soon garnered favorable reputation amongst the working class peasants and town people. With a heightened interest in telling newer and original kaidan, people began scouring the countryside for tales of the mysterious, many of which combined a mixture of ghostly vengeance and elements of karma in Buddhism.

A true popular phenomenon, the hype of Hyakumonogatari Kaidankai combined with new printing technology created a boom in the publication of kaidan-themed books collecting appropriate tales from every corner of Japan and China. But it was in 1677 that the first kaidan-shu was published. Known as Shokoku Hyakumonogatari, or 100 Tales of Many Countries, the book earned popularity for having been a compilation of tales from people residing in several countries, and who further claimed each tale was true.

Books in this genre often used the term Hyakumonogatari in the title, and in fact the published tale's popularity continued long after the fad for the game had faded.

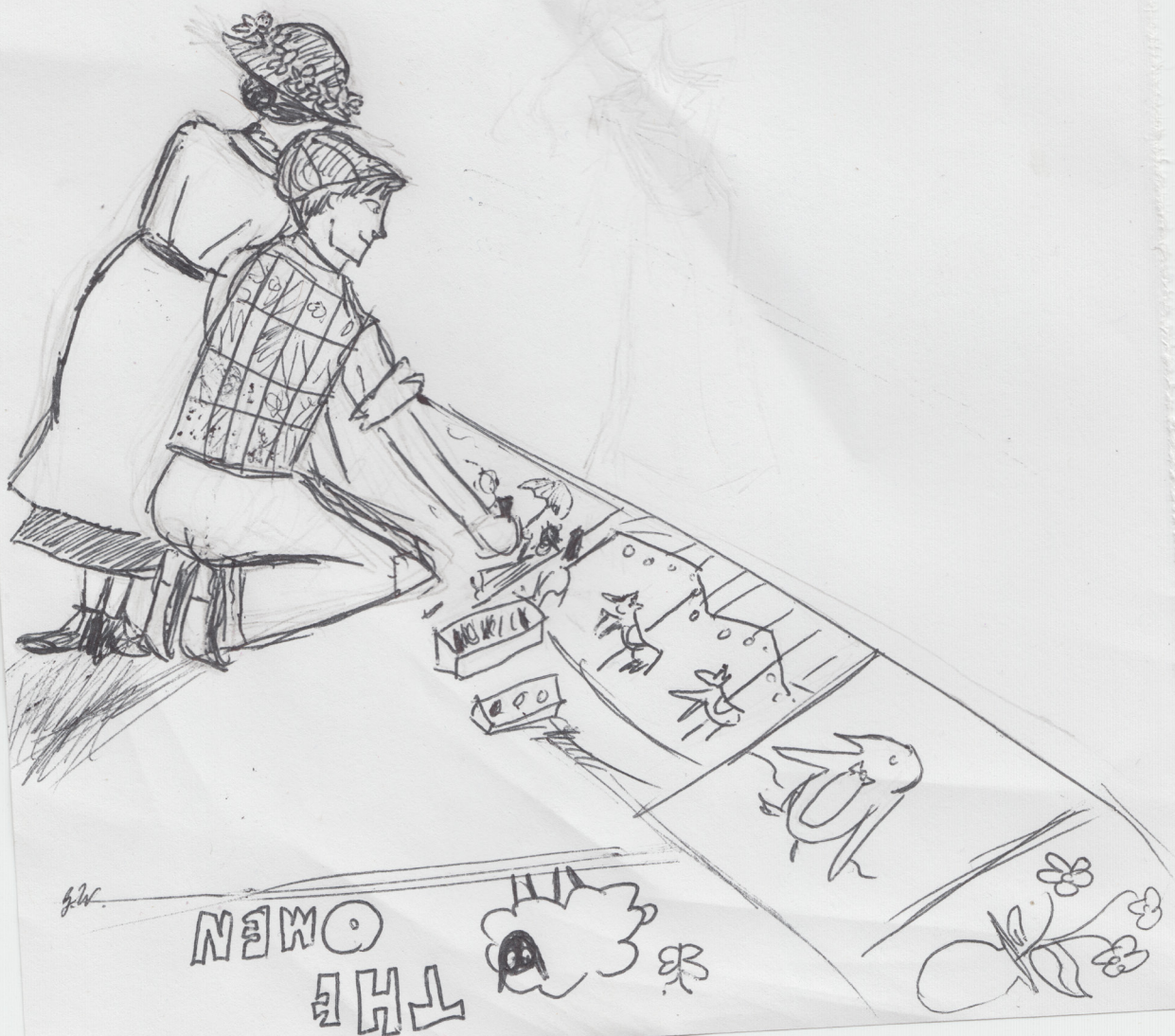
submitted by Fiona Stewart-Taylor

diedforyourspins asked: Yo, I know you'll probably mock this shit, but you're pretty racist. I'm a white guy, straight up, Irish and Italian. But why should I feel 'guilty' because I'm white? Yeah I have advantages because of it, but I had nothing to do with that, nor do I propagate it. My family wasn't even in this country until 1912, so obviously we never had slaves. Growing up my family was pretty poor, and we lived in a city. Almost all of my friends and my parents friends were minorities. I am not a racist.

WAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH



WE MEET
EVERY SECOND THURSDAY



Ain't it

a

Time



(CARRYING THE BANNER ALL DAY)

g.w.
Carrying the

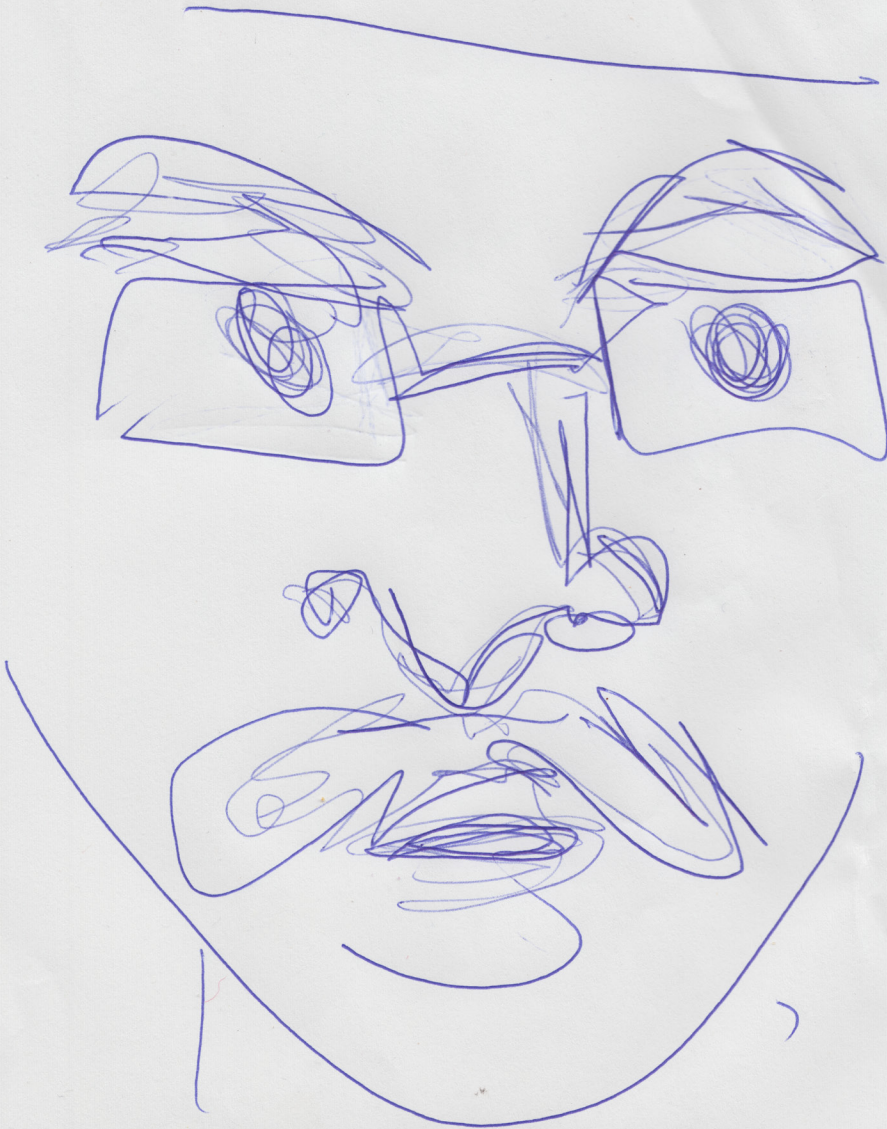
EAT
THE RICH

SELL THE
POOR

Nakun Samy

Everyone should look for the
Born,

- christian mataran 2



Why I Will No Longer Be Eating at SAGA

by Jordan Miron

As a second-year who is no longer on the meal plan, I feel that all new students should know the truth about what goes on at the dining commons. I ate there every day last year and didn't notice anything wrong (besides a serious case of the umbrella poops), until one fateful day in April.

I had just left my dorm for the morning, rockin' my fedora and my favorite P.O.D shirt that has this dude with a gas mask on the front, when I decided to go and get some pancakes at the dining commons.

So I walk in and there's this sorta hot girl behind the counter, like a 7 out of 10. I handed her my ID and she swiped it and gave it back to me, and I made sure to tell her how good her ears look because girls love it when you compliment their ears.

So I go to get food, and I load up my plate with tons of eggs, tater tots and pancakes so that I can make my signature sandwich, the Eggy Tatercakes (in retrospect, this might be partly responsible for the umbrella poops). I sit down at a table and take out my Android so that I can browse Reddit while I eat breakfast, like I usually do. However, I must have been paying too much attention to my phone (someone had just posted an awesome pony video), because I didn't notice that there was something wrong with the eggs.

As soon as I try to take a bite, I notice that there's something hard inside. I then hear a faint squeaking sound, and before I know it, there's a tiny goose crawling out of my breakfast. I tried to call for help, but the goose just kept walking around my plate and puking these little globs of brown stuff. When I tried to ask the kitchen staff what had happened, they threw pennies at me and called me the n-word.

It was at this point that I noticed something tucked under the pancakes. There was a little slip of paper, like you'd find in a fortune cookie, which must have been put there by one of the cooks. I unraveled it and it said "your a dumb idiot and also gay." I was obviously shocked at this, since I have many friends who are homosexual and I respect their decision.

Before I left, I tried to talk to Roberta about getting a refund for my meal, but she called me a little bitch and slapped me in the wiener.



